in the Tendering System. This system is of long standing, which has withstood the test of time and has ample checks to ensure the transparency in purchases.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Modern International Technology for Diamonds Exploration

1047. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA REDDY
DR. M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce modern international technology for exploiting large scale reserves of diamonds located in various States particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the norms fixed for awarding contracts of minerals; and

(d) whether the Government co-ordinate with Mineral Development Corporations of various States in examining the bids before awarding contract?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The National Mineral Policy 1993 envisages, inter-alia, induction of modern technology for High value and scarce minerals, through private participation. The grant of Prospecting Licence and Mining Lease is governed by the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder. The application for grant of Prospecting Licence/Mining Lease is to be made to the State Government only. As Diamond is included in the 1st schedule of Mines & Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957, prior approval of Central Government is required before grant of Prospecting Licence/Mining Leases.

Visit of US Team of Labour Department

1048. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team of U.S. Labour Department visited recently the manufacturing units engaged in the export of fabrics and leather goods to U.S.A.;

(b) if so, the main purpose of their visit; and

(c) reaction of the visiting team and its impact on country's exports?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Proposal to Appoint Tourism Development Corporations

1049. SHRI TARACHAND BHAGORA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether for the convenience of domestic and foreign tourists the Union Government propose to appoint Tourist Development Corporation of States as booking agents;

(b) if so, whether the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (R.T.D.C.) has been made as booking agents; and

(c) if not, whether these corporations are being given booking quota accordingly?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) No Sir. The Department of Tourism does not have any commercial activity.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Inter-State Superfast Express between Bangalore and Hubli

1050. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new inter-State Superfast Express has been introduced between Bangalore and Hubli from October 1, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that another train Shatabdi Express is proposed to be introduced between Bangalore and Hubli towards the end of the year 1996; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) In lieu of the erstwhile 2025/2026 Bangalore-Hubli Shatabdi Express, an intercity Express train viz. 2725/2726 Express has been introduced between Bangalore and Hubli w.e.f. 1.10.96.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Command Training of Boeing 737

1051. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA
SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines has stopped Command Training of Boeing 737;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial measures proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Extension of Rail Services Backward Areas

1052. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY
KUMARI UMA BHARATI

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rail services have not been extended to the backward areas of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any special schemes for expansion of rail services in the backward areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir. The regions including backward areas having rail network are served by passenger carrying trains.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) There are plans to develop new railway lines in the North East Region, Jammu & Kashmir.

Similarly, gauge conversions have been planned is a big way to open up the backward areas of the country. Consequent to the development of the rail network, further expansion of rail services will be planned in future.

[English]

Extension of Railway Line upto Kandla Port

1053. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to extend Gandhidham railway line upto Kandla port and convert it into Broad gauge line;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the above line is likely to be extended and converted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) A broad gauge line already exits between Gandhidham and Kandla Port in addition to the MG line.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Stay of Howrah-Bokaro Train at Bokaro Railway Station

1054. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Howrah-Bokaro Train after its arrival at Bokaro Railway station, stops for five hours;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the efforts made by the Government to extend the said Train upto Ranchi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) 2019/2020 Howrah-Bokaro Shatabdi Express has lieover of 4 hrs. 45 mts. at Bokaro Steel City.

(c) There is no proposal for its extension upto Ranchi due to operational constraints.

[English]

Telephone Exchange for Allahabad

1055. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the target set for setting up of telephone exchanges in Allahabad during the current Plan period and the amount earmarked therefor;

(b) the places in Allahabad where the telephone exchanges have been set up so far and the places where the work is in progress; and

(c) the time by which the on-going telephone exchanges are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The details of target set for setting up telephone exchanges in Allahabad during the current plan period is given in the enclosed statement-I. The amount earmarked is Rs. 164.2 Lakhs.

(b) The details are given in the statement-II enclosed.

(c) By March 1997.

STATEMENT-I

Targets in respect of setting up of Telephone Exchanges in Allahabad during the Current Plan period (1996-97)

	Name of Exchanges	Capacity planned
	1	2
1.	Allahabad	1000 Lines (13K-14K)
2.	Allapur	1000 Lines (4K-5K)